

## Commissioner's Weekly Wrap Up

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DCS Communications Office

**October 22, 2004**

### The Week Ahead

#### Monday, October 25

- Commissioner Miller will conduct leadership training in Murfreesboro.

Staff Contact: Lane Simpson, [lane.simpson@state.tn.us](mailto:lane.simpson@state.tn.us)

#### Wednesday, October 27

- Commissioner Miller will participate in Andrea Walks in the Nashville area.

Staff Contact: Lane Simpson, [lane.simpson@state.tn.us](mailto:lane.simpson@state.tn.us)

- She will also attend the kick-off meeting of the Juvenile Justice Commission in Nashville.

Staff Contact: K. Danielle Edwards, [K.Danielle.Edwards@state.tn.us](mailto:K.Danielle.Edwards@state.tn.us)

#### Thursday, October 28

- The Commissioner will conduct overview training in Memphis.

Staff Contact: Lane Simpson, [lane.simpson@state.tn.us](mailto:lane.simpson@state.tn.us)

### Sick Leave Bank Update

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The 2004 Sick Leave Bank assessment ran on October 19, 2004. This deducted one sick day from all active members based on their September 30, 2004, sick leave balance. For all new members, the four days for joining will be deducted from the October 31 sick leave balance.

For anyone still interested in joining the Sick Leave Bank this year, October 31, 2004 is the deadline. Enrollment forms can be obtained from your central, regional or institutional personnel office.

### CORE Leadership

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*\* Minutes from the CORE Leadership Meeting that occurred on October 19, 2004, will be included in next week's issue.*

### Annual Enrollment Transfer Period 2005

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The Annual Enrollment Transfer Period for 2005 benefits is October 15 – November 15, 2004. During this time, eligible state employee can carryout a number of activities related to insurance benefits. They include:

- Transfer health coverage

- Enroll in, cancel, or transfer dental coverage
- Enroll in optional accidental death and dismemberment coverage
- Enroll in optional term life or optional universal life insurance, if eligible

During October, you will receive a member handbook and provider directory for your current healthcare option **ONLY**. The handbook will outline the benefits for 2005 and the provider directory has information concerning hospital and physician network participants. You will also receive a benefits comparison brochure from the Division of Insurance Administration that outlines the major characteristics of each of the health and dental options for 2005.

## Continuous Quality Improvement

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*Editor's Note: The Weekly CQI column is scheduled to resume next week.*

## Perspective From A New Recruit

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*Submitted by Andrea Ewin Turner, Director of Communications*

I have been with the Department of Children's Service for a little more than two months and would like to share with you the perspective of a new recruit.

I was raised by parents who were children during the Depression. I learned at a very early age that you have to tip your head forward and steadily move through any storm with which you are faced. And, boy, have we had our share of showers and thunderstorms in the past few months!

If I've had the pleasure to meet you, you know I am not one to gush. It's just not in my genetic make-up. Keep this in mind when I ask that you to bear with me for a minute though. I have been completely blown away by the leadership and staff of this agency! You wear your love for and dedication to children on your sleeve. I appreciate and respect that.

In my first few weeks of orientation and OJT (See, I *am* learning the acronyms!), I have met a several dozen people who I am sure are a wonderful representation of the majority of you. I look forward to meeting and getting to know many more of you in the near future and proving my theory.

I had the opportunity to spend a Friday night on call with CPS case manager Keina Winters. With grace and tenacity, she handled every investigation and worked doggedly to ensure the safety and well-being of the children she was assigned to protect. I spent a morning with the folks at Central Intake to better understand how they review, prioritize and assign referrals. I have spent countless hours on the phone with team leaders, team coordinators and case managers, who have demonstrated the patience of Job by explaining information to the "newbie."

I also have been taken under the wing of the agency's law department. I shared with our General Counsel how impressed I have been with the dedication and professionalism of every single department lawyer with whom I have had the pleasure to work.

In closing, I'd like to share with you one of my favorite poems. It immediately follows. It is most fitting. It comes from a book by Marian Wright Edelman titled *Guide My Feet*. I am proud to be a member of this team and will be working to further support you in any way I can. Let me know if I can assist you in any way.

## **We Pray For Children**

From *Guide My Feet* © 1995 by Marian Wright Edelman

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### **We pray for children**

who put chocolate fingers everywhere,  
who like to be tickled,  
who stomp in puddles and ruin their new pants,  
who sneak popsicles before supper,  
who erase holes in math workbooks,  
who never find their shoes.

### **And we pray for children**

who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire,  
who can't bound down the street in a new pair of sneakers,  
who never "counted potatoes,"  
who are born in places we wouldn't be caught dead,  
who never go to the circus,  
who live in an x-rated world.

### **We pray for children**

who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions,  
who sleep with the dog and bury goldfish,  
who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money,  
who cover themselves with Band-Aids and sing off key,  
who squeeze toothpaste all over the sink,  
who slurp their soup.

### **And we pray for children**

who never get desserts,  
who have no safe blanket to drag around behind,  
who watch their parents watch them die,  
who can't find any bread to steal,  
who don't have rooms to clean up,  
whose pictures aren't on anybody's dresser,  
whose monsters are real.

### **We pray for children**

who spend their allowance before Tuesday,  
who throw tantrums in the grocery store and pick at their food,  
who like ghost stories,  
who shove dirty clothes under the bed, and never rinse out the tub,  
who get visits from the tooth fairy,  
who don't like to be kissed in front of the carpool,  
who squirm in church and scream in the phone,  
whose tears sometimes we laugh at,  
whose smiles can make us cry.

### **And we pray for children**

whose nightmares come in the daytime,  
who will eat anything,  
who have never seen a dentist,  
who aren't spoiled by anybody,  
who go to bed hungry and cry themselves to sleep,  
who live and move but have no being.

We pray for children who want to be carried and for those who must, for those we never give up on and those who don't get a second chance,  
For those we smother...and for those who will grab the hand of anybody kind enough to offer it.

## Andrea Walks for Tennessee's Children

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DCS employees continue to Walk with First Lady Andrea! Here are more of their comments about their experience.

Case manager 3 Andrea Graves, from Montgomery County CPS wrote:

*"I just wanted to let you know about one touching moment during our walk here in Clarksville. About 20 minutes into our walk, we had to pass a daycare center. The daycare center staff had all of the children outside, waving at the First Lady, and holding up signs. Some of the signs read, 'Thank you for helping Tennessee's hurt children!', and 'God Bless Andrea.' I work in CPS here in Montgomery County, and I was walking with most of my unit. When we saw those sweet little children waving their signs and cheering, we all started crying! The First Lady went over to them and shook hands with some of them, took a few pictures with them, and thanked the staff. It was wonderful! We had a great time!"*

Amelia Wallace, team coordinator for CPS and JJ in Montgomery and Stewart County, and Kimberly Smith, CPS case manager, both participated in the Clarksville area. Amelia wrote:

*"I walked with the First Lady, Community persons, Legislators, and CPS staff on October 5 and 6. We started at the Montgomery County CAC with a presentation from our County and City mayors, legislators and the First Lady. We walked 11 miles the first day and continued with 10 miles on the second day from Clarksville to Cedar Hill, in Robertson County. I was impressed with the involvement of the day care centers and elementary school that we passed where the children actively greeted the First Lady. She was very interactive with the children who asked questions of her. The First Lady celebrated her first 100 miles with us. A group picture was made in a scenic spot with a working tobacco barn.*

*"A reception was held on the afternoon of the second day. Acknowledgment of supporters was made. Judy Covington, our CAC Director, related that one of the walkers had actually asked, 'What is a CAC?' She expressed that this is what this walk is all about..... how the presence of CACs support the well being of Tennessee children. Our Walk was very meaningful. Those of us who work for CPS appreciated the First Lady's commitment to CACs, and we felt the support of our community by their participation in the Walk."*

Kimberly wrote a note about her experience as well:

*"Amelia Wallace and I walked the entire walk in Clarksville. It was a wonderful experience and it allowed me to see a different side of our team coordinator, Amelia Wallace. I was very sore and tired after the walks, but it was a great accomplishment. I thank Brenda Neal and Amelia Wallace for allowing me to walk and for being such wonderful leaders. They are a great support system."*



*If you take responsibility for yourself you will develop a hunger to accomplish your dreams.*

- Les Brown

*It is easier to find a score of men wise enough to discover the truth than to find one intrepid enough, in the face of opposition, to stand up for it.*

- A. A. Hodge

*You can turn painful situations around through laughter. If you can find humor in anything, even poverty, you can survive it.*

- Bill Cosby

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